What is claimed is:

1. A hydraulic tensioner for imparting tension to a chain comprising:

a housing having a retraction blocking member opening extending into a piston hole in an interior of the housing;

a hollow piston that is axially slidable in the piston hole, the piston having an inside space that forms a fluid chamber with the piston hole, the piston comprising a plurality of rack teeth on at least a portion of an outer circumference of the piston;

a piston spring provided in the piston hole, wherein the piston spring urges the piston in an extending direction;

a retraction blocking member located in the retraction blocking member opening and disposed adjacent to the rack teeth of the piston, the retraction blocking member comprising a teeth portion engageable with the rack teeth of the piston and adapted to permit movement of the piston in the extending direction but to prevent movement in a retracting direction; and

a retraction blocking member spring urging the teeth portion to engage with the rack teeth;

wherein the retraction blocking member has a width greater than that of a tip portion of the rack teeth of the piston.

2. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1:

wherein the retraction blocking member opening comprises a pawl hole;

wherein the retraction blocking member comprises a pawl member provided in the pawl hole, wherein there is an axial clearance between the pawl hole and the pawl member;

wherein the retraction blocking member spring comprises a pawl spring; and

wherein the width of the retraction blocking member comprises a width of the pawl member.

3. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member has a width greater than that of a bottom portion of the rack teeth of the piston.

4. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member has a width greater than that of an outer diameter of the piston.

5. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member spring comprises at least one U-shaped bent portion symmetrically disposed about an axial centerline of the piston, the bent portion contacting a back surface of the retraction blocking member.

6. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 5, wherein the U-shaped bent portion is formed by bending a band-shaped sheet of metal.

7. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member spring comprises two U-shaped bent portions which form a W-shaped bent portion, wherein each U-shaped portion is symmetrically disposed about an axial centerline of the piston, the bent portion contacting a back surface of the retraction blocking member.

8. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member spring comprises at least one U-shaped bent portion and the retraction blocking member comprises at least one axially extending groove on a back surface thereof, such that the U-shaped bent portion of the retraction blocking member spring engages the groove.

9. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 8, wherein the U-shaped bent portion is formed by bending a band-shaped sheet of metal.

10. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the hydraulic tensioner further comprises a pair of engagement recesses and the retraction blocking member spring comprises a pair of engaging hooks on opposite ends thereof such that the engaging hooks of the retraction blocking member spring engage the engagement recesses.

11. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the housing comprises a check valve at a bottom portion of the piston hole, wherein the check valve permits fluid flow into the fluid chamber but blocks reverse flow out of the fluid chamber.

12. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the housing comprises a material having a hardness lower than a hardness of a material that comprises the retraction blocking member.

13. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the housing is composed of aluminum.

14. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member comprises a front end surface and a rear end surface, and the retraction blocking member opening comprises a retraction blocking member opening surface such that the front end surface or the rear end surface of the retraction blocking member contacts the retraction blocking member opening surface when the retraction blocking member extends or retracts.

15. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 1, wherein the retraction blocking member opening comprises a retainer hole radially penetrating into the piston hole, and the retraction blocking member comprises:

a pawl member located in the retainer hole and disposed adjacent to the rack teeth of the piston, wherein the pawl member comprises the teeth portion engageable with the rack teeth of the piston; and

a pawl retainer mounted on the retainer hole and having a pawl housing hole for housing the pawl member;

wherein the retraction blocking member spring comprises a pawl spring; and

wherein a width of an attachment surface of the pawl retainer relative to the retainer hole is the retraction blocking member width.

16. The hydraulic tensioner of claim 15, wherein the housing further comprises a counterbore at an opening end of the piston hole, the counterbore having a greater diameter than a diameter of the piston hole, and wherein the pawl retainer comprises a lower elongated end disposed in a vicinity of the rack teeth of the piston, such that the lower elongated end of the pawl retainer prevents the piston from rotating.